

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJECT: CHURCH REPLY TO GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON CHURCH-MIR
AFFAIR

REF: SANTIAGO 7429

1. SUMMARY: CHURCH REPLY TO GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON INVOLVEMENT
OF RELIGIOUS PERSONNEL IN ASSISTING MIR FUGITIVES (REFTEL)
PRINTED NOVEMBER 6 PRESS. STATEMENT DEPLORES VIOLENCE,
REJECTS ACTIONS OF THOSE WHO AID ADVOCATES OF VIOLENCE, BUT
CITES DEMANDS OF CONSCIENCE IN HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED NO
MATTER WHAT THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS. STATEMENT CALLS FOR FULL
INVESTIGATION OF RECENT EVENTS, INCLUDING "DEATH OF AN
INNOCENT VICTIM" IN COLUMBAN FATHERS SHOOTOUT. STATEMENT
CONCLUDES BY URGING ALL SIDES TO REMAIN CALM AND COOL.
INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF STATEMENT FOLLOWS.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

"THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE HAS DEEMED IT NECESSARY
TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT EXTREMIST ACTIVITIES IN
WHICH SOME PRIESTS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS MAY
BE INVOLVED, TO A GREATER OR LESS EXTENT, AND FOR DIVERSE
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REASONS.

"THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF SANTIAGO AGREES WITH THE NEED FOR TRUE, DETAILED, AND TIMELY INFORMATION CONCERNING ANY EVENT INVOLVING THE SECURITY OR THE FATE OF CITIZENS. IN THE PRESENT CASE, IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES WHO TALKED WITH THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR ON THIS MATTER HAVE RIGOROUSLY RESPECTED THE AGREEMENT TO KEEP SILENT ABOUT THE REASONS WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THIS INTERVIEW, AS WELL AS ITS SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT.

"THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH REGARDING VIOLENCE AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN VIOLENCE AS A METHOD AND AN END OF POLITICAL STRATEGY IS SUFFICIENTLY KNOWN. THIS POSITION HAS JUST BEEN REAFFIRMED IN THE DOCUMENT "EVANGELISM AND PEACE." THOSE WHO PROFESS A MORAL CODE BASED ON THE EVANGELISM OF CHRIST CAN NOT ADVOCATE HATE AND DESTRUCTION, NOR AID OTHERS IN PURSUING THESE ENDS - NO MATTER HOW MUCH THEY INVOKE ALLEGED IDEALISTIC REASONS. THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES OF THIS ARCHDIOCESE REJECT, THEREFORE, AS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST ANY ACTION OF PRIESTS, OTHER MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS, OR LAYMEN WHICH HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY PROVED AND WHICH IMPLIES THEIR SUPPORT FOR AND DIRECT COOPERATION WITH THOSE WHO ADVOCATE VIOLENCE AND HATRED.

"IT IS DIFFERENT IN THE CASE OF THOSE WHO, INSPIRED BY THE REQUIREMENT OF THE EVANGELICAL MESSAGE, BELIEVE IN THEIR CONSCIENCE THAT THEY SHOULD HELP THOSE WHO NEED IT, PROVIDING THE BASIC AID TO PRESERVE HUMAN LIFE NO MATTER WHAT THE PERSONAL POLITICAL BELIEFS OF THE PERSON INVOLVED MAY BE. IT IS USEFUL TO RECALL THAT THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN LOVE LIES PRECISELY IN ITS UNDISCRIMINATING SYMPATHY WITH THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING. THOSE WHO HAVE ACTED FOR THESE REASONS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD, TO BE UNDERSTOOD, AND TO BE RESPECTED BY A PUBLIC WHICH HAS BEEN NURTURED IN THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT. THE CHURCH IS CONFIDENT THAT THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY WILL ALSO RESPECT THIS POINT OF VIEW.

"THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF SANTIAGO STATES, FINALLY, ITS CONFIDENCE THAT THE APPROPRIATE JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONS WILL BE ABLE TO INVESTIGATE IN DEPTH THESE EVENTS - ESPECIALLY
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THE DEATH OF AN INNOCENT VICTIM - IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE CRIMINAL LIABILITY OF EACH PERSON INVOLVED AS WELL AS - IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHILEAN TRADITION - TO ENSURE THE FULL RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL PARTIES.

"MEANWHILE, A POSITION OF CALMNESS AND COOLNESS WILL BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROMPT CLARIFICATION OF EVENTS WHICH WE ALL LAMENT.

"DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION
ARCHBISHOPRY OF SANTIAGO
SANTIAGO, NOVEMBER 5, 1975."

END TEXT.
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